

FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM OF ISRAEL

D A I L Y   P R E S S   B U L L E T I N

No. 37

Tel-Aviv, 6th September, 1948

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1)) BERNADOTTE'S TRAVELS.

("Mivrak", 6.9.48.))

The Swedish Count has set out on a new series of visits to Middle Eastern capitals.

With each successive travel his chances increase by about 1%. At the time he set forth on his mission his chances of success were nil; at the time of the first truce he estimated them at 1%; with the second truce they rose in his opinion to 2%.

A simple calculation will prove that 98 additional truces are all that is needed by the Count in order to bring his mission to a successful finish. It seems, however, that Bernadotte is looking for a short cut (perhaps by application of higher mathematics) and he is right; there is every likelihood that his chances may noticeably and rapidly improve.

Even our ministers cannot conceal any longer that the truce has created for us an unbearable situation. That much is clear to every soldier on the front and every civilian at his home. The truce weighs down on us heavily and the weaker we become, the less capable we are to carry the burden. The truce is threatening us with an economic collapse and general loss of morale.

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To-day we are still strong enough to gain a military decision, but later we will be left with no alternative but to rely on Bernadotte's mediation. Then his chances will soar.

What kind of proposals will the mediator put forward when we have been sufficiently weakened? Past experience provides a ready answer.

After the first round of war, which from the military viewpoint ended in our favour, Bernadotte proposed to make Abdullah king of Jerusalem. After the second round he went so far as to demand the return of Arab refugees. When he feels that our strength is ebbing he will propose something very near to a total liquidation of our independence.

Bernadotte has been waging against us a war of procrastination and attrition. Only now he has reported to the Security Council that the blowing up of the Latrun pumping station by Arabs constituted a violation of the truce, but - it was perpetrated by "irregulars". Although the Security Council decided that governments concerned would bear full responsibility for all activities of their respective irregulars, in this case Bernadotte has not threatened to impose sanctions. He is in no hurry; time works in his favour and in the favour of his employers in London and Washington.

There remains only one way open to counter Bernadotte's tactics: to force the issue. To create a situation that would make it impossible for Bernadotte and his observers to operate. To bring them to a political and practical bankruptcy.

This should be the main object of the Jewish policy at present, and not an effort to achieve membership in the U.N.O. For if Bernadotte is allowed sufficient time, our state will cease to exist before its application is submitted to the final vote.

If internationally recognized Arab states, respected members of the U.N.O., tolerate the existence of freely acting "irregular forces", why should not the State of Israel have them too? What was once known as Underground has now a name and address and will not be considered an "irregular force", but the historical necessity that brought it into being eight years ago has not lost its creative force yet.

The task of the moment is to oust Bernadotte and his observers. Blessed be the hand that does it!

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2) SMALL COINS.

("Mivrak", 3.9.48.)

Only three and a half months elapsed since the establishment of the State of Israel.

The State seems not to have yet emerged from its babyhood. The Government is making its first steps. In normal conditions one would have to forgive it its wobbling steps and lack of balance. Even child's falls are a source of joy to its parents, for they are a portent of a firm stand and steady walk that will come with the strengthening of the child's limbs.

However, the feeling inspired by the Government is entirely different. At the last session of the Zionist General Council there was only one enthusiast so full of admiration that he could not understand why people do not go crazy of sheer rapture. It is not impossible that Mr. Harzfeld has preserved some of his original Zionist naivette and his enthusiasm was quite genuine, but the prevailing feeling is quite different. Far from being crazy with rapture, we strongly suspect that the Government's "falls" are due not to the childish lack of balance, but to senile debility.

It appears that three and a half months old state is already suffering from the sclerotic hardening of arteries.

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The task of suppressing the true picture of the State in the forth month of its life has been entrusted to censorship. Security reasons and false patriotism are convenient pretexts to draw red lines across every attempt to diagnose correctly the ailment, with which the Government is suffering. White spaces spread over newspaper pages. These white spaces are no indication of sins become as white as snow under the influence of the censor's scarlet pencil. On the contrary, the white here is symbolic of dark afflictions that cannot be mentioned by the gagged mouth. The threat of the red pencil makes writers avoid certain delicate topics, but those who want to sing the praise of the state are guided by it into the beaten track.

But no ailment has ever been cured by censorship. Censorship itself is a sure sign of disease and a certain disorder existing in the relations between the government and the public. All censorship does is to deepen lesions and to drive pus into blood vessels.

All advocacy of secrecy is false. A strong administration and a healthy nation are not afraid to face the truth and sell it even at the period of a severe national crisis. Honest and

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sincere criticism gives rise to an urge to correct the defects. The two great Soviet papers, "Pravda" and "Izvestia" did not hesitate to devote daily a whole page to the most devastating criticism of conditions that obtained in industrial and agricultural production. That was in 1940, i.e. just a few months before the outbreak of war with Germany. The Soviet Government was fully aware that all that criticism was accepted with malicious glee at various bureaus in the Reich, whose special task was to take note of and record every unfavourable fact revealed by that criticism. Nevertheless they were not afraid of the truth, for with them criticism served a spur for making radical reforms and renewed efforts towards new goals in production.

We are obsessed with a fear of making bad impression through revealing truth. This fear was however no obstacle to putting through that splendid "Operation Consolidation", although it certainly has created a wrong impression and debased our people in its own eyes and the eyes of the world.

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The small coin crisis is not the first sign of the lack of public faith in the administration.

Lack of faith in the people has provided the Government with a convenient excuse for abstaining from any political initiative. The Provisional President has always considered the masses as "human dust". His policy has been a true reflection of that view. He is still firmly convinced that all our achievements are due not to the sweat and blood of the best sons of the people, but solely to a certain discovery he made in the field of chemistry.

Only two years ago the leaders defeated the civil disobedience scheme on the grounds that the masses could not be relied upon to maintain a prolonged resistance. The masses that withstood successfully the relentless pressure of the fiscal apparatus, ruthless searches under the Martial Law and grave interference with the economic life - failed to earn their leaders esteem and faith. The masses were waiting for a signal to attack, but the official leaders chose retreat.

No wonder that the sympathies of the masses veered towards the fighters, who did not flinch and who believed in the strength of the people and its ability to wage the war of liberation until its victorious end.

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On 14th May, when the mandate came to its end, the crisis in the relations between the leaders and the nation reached its peak. Very few believed at the time that the Jewish Agency would have the courage to take the right step. Many were of the opinion that that was the leaders' last chance. Had they again caused a disappointment, they would have lost all their authority and ceased to exist as the leading centre. That menace and not the will of the Jewish Agency members decided the issue - and there followed the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Declaration of Independence could have turned the tide. It opened the floodgates of the nation's soul and there rushed forward a mighty stream of self-sacrifice and patriotism. Young men were ready to brave fire and death. Bereaved parents wept in secrecy but kept their heads erect, proud of their loss. That stream of self-sacrifice could have provided lavishly all the motive power needed in order to set in motion the whole power station of the state. All activities could be accelerated and energized. There was enough force to swing the wheel of history and endow it with a momentum sufficient to last for generations; there was an opportunity for general purification and rejuvenation.

But around the overflowing springs of patriotism there were standing old people; they were helpless to direct the stream. As a result we are facing to-day a bitter prospect of disappointment and realization that all that torrent of flood has been wasted to no avail, no purpose. The young state is already suffering with senile debility.

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The small coin crisis must have been caused by anti-social elements, always ready to seize upon an opportunity to make fat profits at the expense of the people. They have found their opportunity in the conditions created by the Provisional Government. The germs have been sown by its errors of omission and commission.

The Government has done nothing to stamp out the unbridled elements and defend the citizen from their schemes. The little man has been left to the mercy of blood-sucking profiteers, abandoned to privation and hunger. He has been left victim to the unlawful profiteering in foodstuffs as well as lawful (approved by the Government) profiteering of the Palestine Electric Corporation.

The Government has done much to deceive the public in a manner entirely unbecoming of any self-respecting institution, to say nothing of a government. The scandalous way in which the conscription of the 1934 class of recruits was carried out is an example. Another example is the way in which private cars were seized in Haifa, where car owners had been ordered to report with their vehicles "for registration" and when they did so, they were ordered to leave their cars and walk home.

Who does still trust the Provisional Government? Very few indeed. Who believes that there are no underhand negotiations with Abdullah? Who gives credence to its declarations of its neutrality in foreign policy? Who can attach any weight to its declarations with regard to frontiers and the ultimate fate of Jerusalem?

Few, very few indeed.

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The great treasure of freedom and independence has been changed into small coins. Instead of the large and wide Homeland we have a narrow, winding and broken strip of land.

The descent from the heights of ideal into the abyss of cynicism is evident in every sphere, on the front and in the rear, in the army as well as in the civilian life.

All sources of faith have been exhausted. The people no more regards the Provisional Government as its true representative. It does not trust it any more. In the circumstances the Government will be reduced to making more and more frequent resorts to force and cunning, which are both sides of the self-same small coin. The distance between the nation and its Government will not decrease; on the contrary, the gap will grow wider.

It will grow until the long expected change comes round. Until the young nation has a young Government, that may sometimes err in accounts involving small coins, but will never make a mistake on major issues.

Then the nation will regain its faith in the Government. Wells of heroism and self-sacrifice will gush again, for there is a prolonged national war in front of us.